

REMARKS

Claims 36-56 are now pending in the application. The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action and are believed to place the application in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 36-40, 43-44 and 47-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bray (U.S. Pat. No. 5,435,624). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claims 36 and 52 respectfully call for seat hinge assembly and a seat assembly including a sliding pin preventing movement of an arm relative to a support in a locking position. In addition, Claims 36 and 52 call for a drive draft that rotates from a first position to slide along a first slot to move the sliding pin from the locking position without moving the locking arm relative to the support and in a second position to move the arm relative to the support.

Independent Claim 44 calls for a shaft disposed within an elongated slot of a support to interface an arm as the shaft slides in the elongated slot to move a sliding pin from a first position to a second position before driving the arm relative to the support.

Bray fails to teach a drive shaft that moves along a slot from a first position to a second position to cause a slide pin to move from a locked positioned to unlocked position without moving an arm relative to a support. Furthermore Bray fails to teach a drive shaft that rotates the arm relative to the support once in the second position of the slot.

Bray teaches a powered vehicle seat (10) having a seat portion (12) connected to a back portion (14) by a recliner mechanism (16). See Bray at Column 2, Lines 27-29 and FIG. 3. The back portion may be moved relative to the seat portion into either a reclined position or a dumped position. See Bray at Column 3, Lines 57-65 and Column 4, Lines 17-35. In operation, an occupant pushes a switch (74) causing a motor (64) to move a dump gear (70) relative to a sector member (32) to rotate the back portion relative to the seat portion and into a dumped position. See Bray at Column 3, Lines 47-61. To rotate the back portion into a reclined position relative to the seat portion, an occupant activates a switch powering a recline motor (40) to rotate a pair of recline gears (58, 59). See Bray at Column 4, Lines 15-21. Rotation of the recline gears causes the sector member to rotate about a pin (30) and, thus, cause rotation of the back portion relative to the seat portion. See Bray at Column 4, Lines 21-29. Rotation of the back portion relative to the seat portion is defined generally by engagement between a pin (38) and a slot (40). See Bray at Column 4, Lines 29-35 and FIG. 3.

As described, Bray fails to teach a drive shaft that rotates along a slot between a first and second position. Therefore, Bray also fails to teach a drive shaft that causes a sliding pin to move between an unlocked position and a locked position as the drive shaft moves between the first and second positions of the slot. Applicant further notes that Bray fails to teach a slide pin that moves between a locked position and an unlocked position to selectively prevent rotation of an arm relative to a support member. Rather, Bray teaches a series of gears (48, 50, 70) that are in selective engagement with a sector member (32) to prevent rotation of a back portion (14) relative to a seat portion (12). Because Bray fails to teach a drive shaft that moves along a slot between

a first position and a second position to move a sliding pin between an unlocked position and a locked position, Applicant further submits that Bray fails to teach such movement between the first and second positions of the slot without causing movement of the arm relative to the support. In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that Bray fails to teach each and every element of the present invention.

Because Bray fails to teach a drive draft that moves between first and second positions of a slot to move a sliding pin between a locked position and an unlocked position to selectively prevent rotation of an arm relative to a support, and further, because Bray fails to teach movement of the sliding pin from the locked position to the unlocked position without causing movement of the arm relative to the support, Applicant respectfully submits that Bray fails to teach each and every element of the present invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 36, 44 and 52 as well as Claims 37-43, 45-51, and 53-56, respectfully dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that Claims 41-42 and 45-46 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have not amended independent Claims 36 and 44 to include the allowable subject matter of Claims 41-42 and 45-46 as independent Claims 36 and 44 are believe to be in condition for allowance in their present form in light of the foregoing remarks.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____



Michael Malinzak
Reg. No. 43,770
Matthew H. Szalach
Reg. No. 53,665

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

MM/MHS/pal